

Message Text

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11

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 EUR-25 RSC-01 DRC-01 /050 W

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R 270734Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0585

DOD WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TRIPOLI 1245

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CDES LY

SUBJECT: GRAVES OF AMERICANS AT TRIPOLI

REF: HOLM/CLARK (AF/N) LETTERS OF JUNE 3 AND 7, 1973

1. PROBLEM: ABOUT 60 AMERICANS, MOSTLY INFANTS WHO DIED AT WHEELUS AIR BASE IN THE 1960'S, ARE BURIED IN THE "CHRISTEN CEMETERY" AT TRIPOLI. IN MAY THIS YEAR THE CEMETERY WALL WAS REMOVED, PREPARATORY TO MAKING THE AREA AN EXTENSION OF THE ADJACENT PUBLIC PARK BUT BEFORE ANY OF THE PROMISED ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE BY THE MUNICIPALITY TO MOVE THE REMAINING GRAVES, MOSTLY ITALIAN, GREEK AND OTHER EUROPEAN, INCLUDING BRITISH CIVIL AND MILITARY GRAVES. AS A RESULT OF UNRESTRICTED PUBLIC ACCESS, MANY OF THE GRAVESTONES HAVE NOW BEEN VANDALIZED. IN SECTION MARKED "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA CEMETERY PLOT", WHERE NEARLY ALL AMERICAN GRAVES LOCATED, HARDLY A TOMBSTONE REMAINS IN PLACE AND INTACT.

2. BACKGROUND ON THIS DEVELOPING SITUATION WAS REPORTED TO AF/N BY THE LETTERS CITED, WITH A REQUEST TO LET US KNOW WHO IS CONCERNED WITH SUCH MATTERS IN THE PENTAGON, PERHAPS THE AIR FORCE CHAPLAIN'S OFFICE. NO SUBSTANTIVE REPLY HAS BEEN RECEIVED, DESPITE REMINDER SENT AUGUST 2.

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3. SEEMS TO ME THE BASIC ACTION ISSUES PRESENTED

ARE AS FOLLOWS: IS ANY AGENCY OF THE USG OFFICIALLY INTERESTED IN THE FATE OF THESE GRAVES? IF NOT, THE EMBASSY WILL STILL DO WHAT IT CAN INFORMALLY (VERY LITTLE), IN CONJUNCTION WITH LOCAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY. IF SO, IS THE AGENCY PREPARED TO PAY THE COSTS OF MOVING THE GRAVES TO A NEWLY ENCLOSED CEMETERY OUT OF TOWN, BEFORE THEY ARE OBLITERATED, OR TO TAKE OTHER RELEVANT ACTION LIKE LOCATING AND NOTIFYING RELATIVES TO ARRANGE A MOVE THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF THAT AGENCY. (HMG IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE PLANNING TO PRINT NOTICES IN METROPOLITAN HOME NEWSPAPERS INFORMING RELATIVES OF LISTED REMAINS OF CIVILIANS THAT REMOVAL OF THE GRAVES IS INDICATED AND THAT THEY MAY BE REPATRIATED AT PERSONAL EXPENSE. FOR VARIOUS REASONS, DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS IN OUR CASE.)

4. REQUEST AT LEAST AN INTERIM REPLY WITHIN A WEEK.
JOSIF

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Message Attributes

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